

**Statement Before
Public Safety & Security Committee
Tuesday, March 4, 2014**

HB 5392 AAC the Collection and Disposal of Unwanted Medication

Good Afternoon Senator Hartley, Representative Dargan and members of the Public Safety & Security Committee. My name is Margherita Giuliano and I am both a pharmacist and the Executive Vice President of the Connecticut Pharmacists Association. The Connecticut Pharmacists Association is a professional organization representing 1,000 pharmacists in the state of Connecticut. I am here today to speak to HB 5392 An Act Concerning the Collection and Disposal of Unwanted Medication.

This proposed legislation addresses a very critical public health issue in our communities: the availability of prescription drugs in a medicine cabinet that become easily accessible to family members, young people, and others. In the last few years, the statistics concerning prescription drug abuse among teens has escalated.

Some drug abuse facts that are directly related to the access issue:

- Two-thirds of teens who abuse pain relievers say they got the pills from family members and friends;
- More Americans die from drug overdoses than in car crashes and this increasing trend is driven by use of prescription painkillers.
- 90% of all adults with substance abuse disorders started using under the age of 18 and the other half started using under the age of 15.
- One in nine young people aged 12 to 25 used prescription drugs non-medically within the past year.
- 62% of teens report that their parents have talked to them about drugs and alcohol in the past year. But only 17% of teens say their parents have talked to them about prescription drug abuse.

Clearly, this is a growing epidemic, especially among our young people. The need for a convenient and secure drop box system for parents, grandparents, and others to safely dispose of unneeded medication is critical.

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the state Department of Consumer Protection currently runs a voluntary program for police departments that has approximately 40 participants. This program is currently working very well and we strongly support using this program as a model for potential expansion of the program to other municipal departments.

We would be very interested in working with the Committee, as well as with DCP and the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association, to create marketing and publicity materials to raise awareness about the drop boxes at police departments, since pharmacists are usually on the front line of answering questions about, and advising their patients concerning, unwanted medication disposal issues.

Thank you again for your time and interest.